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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY





THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600 7 September 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL FURTHER DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS **NOT** AUTHORIZED

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7 September 1965

HIGHLIGHTS

A joint five-battalion USMC/ARVN sweep-and-destroy operation launched yesterday against a suspected major Viet Cong infiltration point for personnel and supplies in northeastern Quang Ngai Province is proceeding according to plan. Thus far, enemy resistance has been light, although it is believed that there is a Viet Cong Provincial Headquarters, a regular Viet Cong battalion, and a separate Viet Cong company, as well as a number of Viet Cong guerrilla forces, in the area. In southern Laos, roadwatch teams continue to report substantial numbers of Communist troops walking south. Many of these troops have been identified as Pathet Lao rather than PAVN, but these identifications cannot be considered firm.

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: ordinated five-battalion USMC/ARVN sweep-and-destroy operation was launched late yesterday against a suspected Viet Cong Provincial Headquarters, storage area, and reinforced battalion in northeast Quang Ngai Province; the operation, with tactical close air and artillery support. has thus far failed to establish significant contact with enemy units in the target area (Paras. 1-3). MACV now believes that a total of 904 Viet Cong were killed as the result of the regimental-strength USMC/ARVN "Operation Starlite" south of Chu Lai on the Van Tuong Peninsula from 17-25 August (Para. 4). An estimated Viet Cong company has sustained significant losses thus far as the result of a searchand-destroy operation initiated by two USMC companies near the coastal city of Qui Nhon (Binh Dinh Province) on 5 September; the marines are reported to have employed tear gas in the operation to clear caves and tunnels of women and suspected Viet Cong (Paras. 5-6). The US Army's "Operation RAMROD" initiated by elements of the 101st Airborne Brigade in Binh Dinh Province on 25 August continues according to plan, with enemy casualties to date reported as heavy (Para, 7). Two saturation bombing missions were conducted by Guam-based USAF B-52 Stratofortresses against suspected Viet Cong positions in South Vietnam during 4-5 September (Para. 8).

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their fa	amilies cease c	orrupt praction	ces or face	
posure a	and dismissal f	rom the service	ce	

- (Para. 1).
- VI. Other Major Developments: Substantial numbers of Communist troops continue to walk south in the Laotian panhandle (Para. 1). The majority of these troops have been identified as Pathet Lao rather than PAVN (Para. 2).

SOUTH VIETNAM

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I. MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. A coordinated five-battalion USMC/ARVN sweep-and-destroy operation was launched late yesterday in the area of the Cape Batangan and An Ky peninsulas, in northeast Quang Ngai Province, to eliminate a suspected major Viet Cong infiltration point for personnel and supplies.

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show a Viet Cong Provincial Headquarters, a regular Viet Cong battalion, and a separate Viet Cong company in the operational area, as well as guerrilla forces and considerable fortifications.

- 2. Tactical close air support is being provided by the 1st Marine Air Wing, and naval gunfire support by the <u>USS Oklahoma City</u>, <u>USS Orleck</u>, <u>USS Pritchett</u>, and the <u>USS Diachenko</u>. Forty USMC and 16 US Army helicopters were utilized in the heliborne landings; 13 US river craft participated in the amphibious landings.
- 3. Late reports indicate the operation is proceeding according to plan. Enemy resistance has thus far been limited to light sniper fire in all tactical areas. Beach mines were encountered by the landing force, and live charges were used to assist in clearing lanes. Initial friendly casualties have been placed at two killed (1 US) and three wounded. No known Viet Cong losses have been reported to date; however, South Vietnamese junk division units have captured one possible Viet Cong boat and have detained 29 suspects.
- 4. According to MACV, the total number of Viet Cong killed in the course of the regimental-strength USMC/ARVN "Operation Starlite" conducted south of Chu Lai on the Van Tuong Beninsula from 17-25 August may now be validated as follows:

614 found and buried by US Forces
50 found and buried by ARVN Forces
300 found unburied and reported by Province Chief
964 Total VC killed

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In addition, an unknown number of enemy troops were sealed in caves.

- 5. An estimated Viet Cong company has sustained losses of 28 killed, three captured, and 150 suspects detained thus far, as the result of a search-and-destroy operation initiated by two USMC companies 10 miles north of Qui Nhon (Binh Dinh Province) on 5 September. American casualties to date in the coordinated sea and airborne operation, with aerial and artillery support, stand at one killed and three wounded.
- 6. Late press reports have quoted US military spokesmen in Saigon as confirming the use of tear gas by US Marines to drive women and suspected Viet Cong from caves and tunnels during the Qui Nhon operation. Official spokesmen reportedly stated the marine battalion commander in charge of the operation used the gas on his own initiative and that permission would not have been granted had a request been made to MACV in Saigon. An investigation is under way.
- 7. The US Army's "Operation RAMROD," initiated by elements of the 101st Airborne Brigade in
 Binh Dinh Province on 25 August, has resulted in
 cumulative Viet Cong losses to date of 52 killed
 (18 by body count), 16 wounded, 13 captured, and
 184 suspects detained. The operation, designed to
 provide perimeter defense of An Khe and security
 of Route 19 between Qui Nhon and An Khe to permit
 the unopposed deployment of the US 1st Cavalry
 Division to the area later this month, has thus
 far produced US casualties of two killed and seven
 wounded.
- 8. Saturation bombing missions were conducted by Guam-based USAF B-52 Stratofortresses against Viet Cong positions in South Vietnam during 4-5 September. In the 4 September strike, 11 B-52s released 561 750-1b. bombs on a suspected Viet Cong base near the Quang Tin-Quang Ngai Province border believed to contain command and control elements of Military Region V headquarters. On

- 5 September, 29 B-52s expended 1,479 750-lb. bombs on a Viet Cong encampment suspected of containing a training center, communications school, and support personnel, equipment, and supplies located in the guerrilla War Zone "D" stronghold north-northeast of Saigon. All participating aircraft in both operations were recovered safely at Guam. No follow-up ground exploitation of either target zone was planned.
- 9. MACV's military reports for 4 and 5 September show a combined total of 128 Communistinitiated incidents, 17 of which occurred during the 48-hour reporting period. The most significant enemy action occurred on 4 September in the Mekong Delta province of Bac Lieu, where a company or more of Viet Cong attacked a Regional Forces outpost inflicting friendly losses of 12 killed, 15 wounded, 11 missing, and 40 weapons captured.

Small-scale acts of terrorism against the civilian population, mortar and small-arms harassment of isolated district towns, New Life hamlets, and strategic military outposts, and sabotage against major transportation routes and the coastal railroad continued unabated throughout the countryside.

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II.	POLITICAL	DEVELOPM	ENTS IN	SOUTH VIET	NAM		
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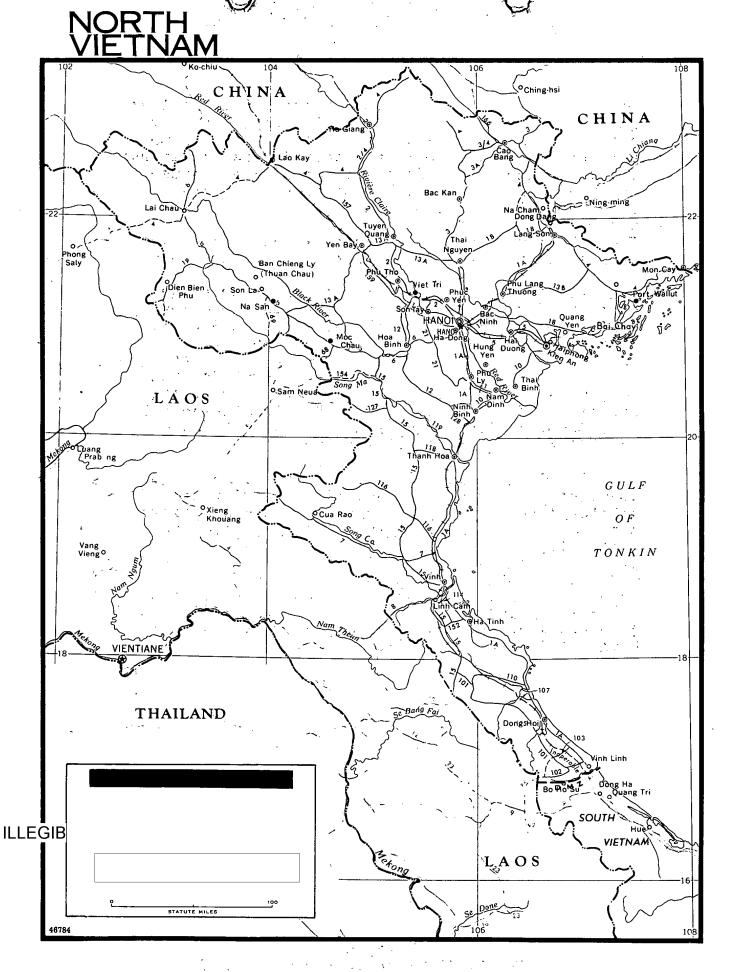
		25)
5. On 7 September Ky p government officials (presum military) that court action officials or their families illegally. Corruption, acco of the reasons why civil ser with the people. Perhaps hi	will be taken against who are profiteering rding to Ky, is one vants are in disfavor	

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prior information to speculate in land in the Cam Ranh Bay area, Ky said that wives had in the past cashed in on their husbands; positions.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. Nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Communist China renewed its propaganda criticism of the Soviet Union with a vitriolic speech by Lo Jui-ching at a Peking rally on 3 September. Implying that the USSR was attempting to sell out the Vietnamese to reach a bigger settlement with the US, Lo asserted that the "Khrushchev revisionists" want only to live "in docile peace" with the US. He declared that to this end "they do not scruple to sell out their friends and brothers -- their actions have greatly encouraged US imperialism." Lo added that "occasionally they make a gesture of opposition to the US and put up a pretense of helping" the people of other countries in their "revolutionary struggles." Lo alleged that the Soviets do this, however, "simply for the purpose of deceiving the people, so as to gain control over their revolutions, subordinate these revolutions to their revisionist line, and capitalize on them in their political bargaining with US imperialism."

CAMBODIA

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VI. OTHER MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- 1. Substantial numbers of Communist troops continue to walk south past roadwatch teams situated in the Laotian panhandle. Some 1,000 enemy troops were counted walking south on Route 23 between 25 August and 6 September by a team located approximately 25 miles north of Muong Phine. A total of approximately 3,500 southbound and 150 northbound enemy troops have been counted by this team since 1 June.
- 2. The majority of these troops have been identified as Pathet Lao rather than PAVN, although such identification should not be considered definitive. The origin and destination of these troops remains unclear.
- 3. Further north, in the Mu Gia Pass area, 150 Pathet Lao troops have been counted walking south since 3 September, bringing the total south-bound in this area to some 2,100 troops (and north-bound 335 troops) since 1 June.

